

REWRITE



The Magazine of Effective Writing

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SHALL I SPECIALIZE OR NOT?

We frequently run into writers who specialize in one form of writing, or who don't, but would like to. And writers who, because they have specialized, experience problems. To specialize or not is one of the problems that all writers sooner or later face. It's well to do some thinking about it so you'll know what you wish to do when the time for a decision turns up. For it is always better, you will probably agree, to know the answer to a problem before you face it than afterwards.

First off, then, I will confess that I am not a specialist man myself. We have learned in this profession of helping all & several kinds of writers, that there is a virtue in knowing something about many special types of writing. The eternal fundamentals, you see, show up much more clearly. Moreover, as a beginning free lance writer I very early was required to do a wide variety and constantly changing assortment of newspaper and magazine jobs. Starting with a graduate course in playwriting, I had city room (reporter) training, as well as experience under two of the best American theater critic editors and a very fine feature editor, not to mention one of the most erudite and popular (in his day) book critics. It's not at all surprising, therefore, that I am a firm believer in learning the all around task of writing.

There are several very good reasons, however, why I think that the specialist is at a disadvantage over the generally efficient writer. First, styles change. I know a number of writers in both the fact and fiction fields, who have largely gone dry, and been left high on the beach, unable to sell. Only the other day a member of the WCS Family told me she had been rereading the fictional writers of the Twenties, Thirties & Forties. She said she noticed a very definite, unmistakable change in the writing of today from that of yesterday. She wasn't sure she recognized the change specifically, but she was sure it was there.

I believe it is a blend of style and pace and, most of all, of outlook and attitude. A world cannot continue to deteriorate for 30 years and not leave scars of cynicism, disillusionment and moral decadence upon people inhabiting that world. The writer who is an opportunist in the best sense of the word is likely to have a broader outlook and better perspective. He can adapt himself to changing conditions, and therefore, has a healthier, more optimistic viewpoint.

The writer who can do a number of different kinds of writing reasonably well, is likely to write better, if possibly less brilliant-

ly, than the man who limits himself to one, single type of writing. And if he happens to possess temperament or even genius, he will be able to harness, yet exploit, that human attribute better. Specialization after all, is a form of cramping one's style. I know a writer who tries so hard to live at the top of his soul that he refuses to permit himself to read any fiction. The result is that his pedantic, stuffed shirt attitude shows very obviously in his writing. Also, one's destiny occasionally plays perverse tricks on one. This writer found himself bedeviled into doing a fanciful book that required him semi-occasionally to drop into a fictional form. His handling of these passages was pathetic and marred an otherwise beautiful book.

One of the commonest fatalities in writing is the young writer, who tries to write fiction without any sense of contact with people. This type of writer can flounder about for years, largely because he lacks journalistic feeling for his material. Al Jolson, Eddie Cantor, Walter Winchell, Fanny Brice & so many other actors have all suffered from unpleasing, strained voices, the badge of a beginning in East Side and vaudeville break in amateur nights, etc. But they all have a common gift for understanding audiences.

This winter we have seen several writers, who had never sold much stuff, suddenly begin to catch on. In almost every case, Bill had persuaded them to try their hand at some journalistic, "practical" writing. It is amazing sometimes to see the fiction of such writers firm up. They begin to get the feel of writing for a particular audience, of adapting themselves to a special group, & of catching and holding the roving reader by a dramatic or timely and curiosity-arousing opening.

One advantage of this ability to hit several kinds of editors is, for the inexperienced writer, that he can earn while learning. We have seen this prove valuable for a number of writers recently. It has sometimes meant the difference between continuing and giving up writing. For the older writer, too, it keeps a long, hard, lonely job from ever becoming jaded. Charles H. Woodbury, a great marine artist, told me once that John Singer Sargent had become bored with portraits, and was experimenting with new mediums before his death. He had technique and the skill of a specialist, but no inner incentive.

There probably lies the real answer to the problem. Writers for whom the great world of their work never grows small and circumscribed, rarely grow old in spirit. They retain, happily, the quality of being forever young and enthusiastic. They have the drive & energy that makes for a successful writer and entertainer in any field. They can adapt.

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|---------------------|---------------------------|-----------------|
| <u>MAKE</u> | <u>William E. Harris,</u> | <u>CLEAN UP</u> |
| <u>THE U.N.</u> | <u>Elva Ray Harris,</u> | <u>AMERICAN</u> |
| <u>REALLY WORK!</u> | <u>Editors.</u> | <u>POLITICS</u> |

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THE TRUTH ABOUT INFLATION

As this was written (Aug. 3rd) the American people had just lost one more battle in the struggle to stop inflation. Congress had passed the watered down controls bill which would only have increased inflation, even if passed according to the President's specifications. Mr. Truman put on an act in tremulo, telling the people how he had tried, so hard, to stop inflation. And then just to be sure that inflation would not be stopped, he opened the gates to higher wages which will inevitably lead to a higher round of prices. And so the dreary merry-go-round grinds on, stripping the people of their savings, that the politicians may continue their selfish, ruthless waste and extravagance. How stupid do the politicians of both major parties believe the American people really are?

Here is the real cause of Inflation. It's all summed up in a single paragraph of a release dated July 29th. Mr. E.A. Goldenweiser was for 20 years the Director of Research & Statistics, Federal Reserve Board. He should know whereof he speaks. And because even he gives the American people the wrong advice, his statement of the facts should go unchallenged. Here it is:

"Deficits arising from war or large-scale military outlays, as distinguished from those caused by depression," says the release, in paraphrasing Mr. Goldenweiser's ideas, "should be met so far as possible by taxation & bond-selling campaigns aimed at current income, in Dr. Goldenweiser's opinion. Insofar as this fails to raise sufficient funds, 'it might as

well be recognized that money needed for—war purposes and not raised by taxes or tapping the people's savings, must be CREATED.' (The italics are ours. Ed.) Such creation, he believes, can be accomplished either by borrowing from commercial banks or, directly, from Federal Reserve Banks. In either case, this creation of money should be resorted to only after every effort to raise money by non-inflationary methods has been made, and, it should be kept to a minimum."

Footnote: in June the Federal Government, having finished the previous fiscal year ahead of itself, with a surplus, again began spending more money than it is taking in. In other words, it will have to "create" money. It has been doing that for nearly 20 years. The Truman Administration is the first, believably, in the whole history of our country, which has ever done this with such irresponsible recklessness in a period of general prosperity. The "armed peace" in which we have been living, cannot be blamed entirely for this wiping out of billions of dollars of the people's savings.

Let us not be fooled. Mr. Goldenweiser is aware that government savings bonds, borrowed from the people are not "current income", as he implies in his paragraph. And "created" money is a euphuism, a more pleasing substitution, for over-drawing one's account. A private citizen is not permitted to write a check against which there do not exist funds to draw on. Yet in plain language that is exactly what our government has been doing for 20 years! A crime for which any citizen can be clapped into jail. That is why we have inflation. The politicians on both sides of the aisle are unwilling to stop appropriating money, so they cheat by "thinning" the money—as you would floor paint. Some day an accounting is inescapable. That is why the Russian dictators bide their time and try to aid us in ruining ourselves as quickly as possible.

I have enough faith in the American people to believe they have the guts to face up to this situation, if it is presented squarely to them. There is only one method of solving this problem: (1) to cut down every unnecessary expense; (2) to eliminate waste; (3) to put the Federal Government (and the local ones) on a budget, and live absolutely within it; (4) gradually to pay off the balloon debt—the visible sign of our folly; (5) place the American dollar on a rock bottom, and maintain its full value, as set by law, through thick and thin, through good times and bad. I believe the American people are capable of doing this.

There is one very simple method by which, I believe, the American democratic way of life can be preserved. It is already on the statute books. Baseball has its "czar". Why not a controller with the power to force presidents & congressmen to live within a budget? The details could be worked out & refined. We can have freedom, if we want it enough.

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FUNDAMENTALS OF GOOD POETRY

By Elva Ray Harris

WHAT PRICE WRITING IN YOUR LIFE?

One hundred and thirty-two years ago this month (August) John Keats wrote in a letter: "I am convinced more and more, day by day that fine writing is, next to fine doing, the top thing in the world." (Quoted from: "Writing Your Poem", Lawrence John Zillman, Funk & Wagnalls Co.) The underlining is mine.

In January we make resolutions to do better, but it is September that marks the beginning of the writing year for many of us. In July and August we have had vacations or resting periods; or we have attended a writers' conference and have become saturated—we hope—with enough stimulation to last the whole year through. Now is the time, therefore, to look at life and writing realistically and to decide what it is we want to get out of next year. What do we want to write? Why do we want to write? What connection is there between writing and our private lives? Between writing and the private lives of our own family and friends, and all of the other people in the world?

The first question to ask is: how important is writing to me? One sometimes gets the impression from attending writers' conferences and clubs, and reading writers' magazines—that writing is the most important thing in the world. You hear teachers and established writers advise would-be authors who question them as to how to find time out of a harried life to write: "Make time to write. Write something every day. You can find time, always, if you really want to!" This advice is usually given without any inquiry into what obligations the person has to fulfill every day. The teacher generally is pretty scornful of the writer who cannot make time. And the established authors often tell at length how they have "produced" under heroic difficulties, or in the face of impossible deadlines.

Let's take a realistic view of the subject. Anyone, doubtless, can find time to write, if it is so important to him that he is willing to drop some of his responsibilities in order to do so. But is it worth it? Have we a "right" to do so, often at the expense of a loved one, or our commitments in the community? Is writing for us that important? I am reminded at this moment of the two extremes: on the one hand of a woman who belonged to so many writers' clubs and attended so many conferences, she never had any time to write. At the other a man like Ludwig Beethoven, whom life seemed to cheat of every human contact and who driven inward upon himself, managed nevertheless to express without any seeming "hurt" feeling the utter sublimeness of the most glorious sense of living.

Yes, let us never forget that writing is a

good and honorable profession. Without it the world would be in a sorry state. If we could not consult the written word we would be in a quandary many times. If our historians had not set down the triumphs and mistakes of our ancestors, we would have nothing to use as a guide to our own conduct. So it is important to us to have the thoughts of great minds who have lived before us, to refer to. It is important to us to have really good fiction to show us how people lived and the way they told their tales. There is no doubt in anyone's mind of the worth, and the strengthening values of good writing. But is not a writer a bit ostrich-minded to consider that his profession is the most important?

Is not writing in fact a means to an end, rather than the end in itself? Isn't writing the intangible profession that supports the tangible professions? The servant rather than the king? Shouldn't it take a humble seat at the foot of the throne? I cannot think of a profession that does not use writing in order to its own work better. The medical profession uses the written word to educate the people and to keep their own practitioners informed of better ways of helping, and curing the sick. The teaching profession is practically dependent upon writing in instructing its students how to think and do. There are written instructions with each of the machines anyone may choose to run & every package of food one opens. Each and every time you turn around you run into written words. You may say this is not writing, in the sense we use it. But you will have to admit it is necessary and yet the writing is never the end in itself, but only the means.

One might argue that in fiction or poetry the writing is the end. But it is not. Both fiction and poetry have a purpose, even if it is nothing greater than to entertain. Readers, you might say, are the end. The writing is the means of entertaining, of instructing and inspiring or informing them. Therefore, let us then keep writing in its place. If it is the servant, let us never make it a god! Whether we consider the reader or the writer, the "spark" derives from the rich, whole fabric of life, not from the special skill, or the technique alone.

What does it profit a mother, for example, to lock the door on her children from eight to twelve in the morning, in order to write a piece to be sold to a children's magazine, even though it teaches a very good moral? A writer reaches hundreds, you will say, where a parent guides only a few. But couldn't she teach more effectively and do more real good by personally supervising the activities and emotional welfare of her own children rather than leaving them to be guided by neighbors?

What does it profit a man so filled with a desire to write that he spends most of each waking hour beyond his job putting thoughts

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on paper, while his wife and children get a long as best they can, trying to be a family unit with one of the vital elements missing. Perhaps he is trying to earn more money for luxuries for them. Perhaps he wishes fondly to make writing his ultimate career. But if he is not careful, it can make him its slave just as any other business or a craving for any powerful drug can do. Bill once told me of coming home from meeting one of the most popular serial writers in slick magazines & also the popular reprint book field. He had known this author when her career was getting underway. Now he was shocked to see her lined face, the driven quality in her every move. She was a success and paying a costly price. I fail to understand why any writer, under such conditions, should strive so hard for an intangible result, if it is necessary to miss so much of the sweetness of living, in order to accomplish it.

If we have a talent for writing and the intelligence and perseverance to put it to good use, let us not hide our light under a bushel. But neither let us try to bring it into such prominence that it blinds our eyes and prevents us seeing other talents. The world could well do without at least half that is written by well intentioned would-be writers. And the authors who have written that half, might better have spent time developing other talents, such as being a good wife, or a good husband, or helping with community projects or any number of other things. Projects that would leave the world a better & happier place to live in.

I do not mean to say that these folk ought not to write. We all of us have to do whatever is inside of us. No one should judge a fellow human being and tell him he shouldn't write. But we all of us can try to appreciate more clearly what writing means to us & what is its relation to the life we are attempting to live. Most of all, we can, and, certainly should, pray to God to give us an imaginative power to view life with a sense of proportion that will enable us to do the big job of writing and living well.

I have a very good friend, a non-writer who asks the question: "Why does anyone write?" Her idea is that so much has already got in to print that no one can read it all. There are, of course, a million answers to such a question, but her point is well taken. We do have a great stock-pile. So great we should only need, and try, to add the best. If we think of the world as an editor who is overstocked, but still interested and looking about, but only for writing so good he can't pass it up, perhaps we would not clutter up the mails with so much poor stuff. We can only write as well as we are able at any given moment. But if we would make every effort to recognize the true value of our writing, the time we might save ourselves, the postal department, and the editors might easily be used to do the world a lot more good. Grow in awareness to life as well as writing.

Someone has said that if you are going to be a writer, you must be ruthless. I do not believe it is necessary to be ruthless, nor does it pay. One of our most prolific present day writers is ruthless. He is extremely self-centered. He has no human consideration for anyone else. He does write a great piece now and again. But he writes much more that should never see the printed page. He could be much more ruthless with himself in blue pencilling his less worthy work. It is not ruthlessness, but greatness of heart and mind that makes a writer good enough to be read and remembered.

Now I have been talking a good deal in regard to the writer's responsibilities to other people. But it is perfectly true that others have responsibilities toward him. If you want to write, you should have every reasonable chance to do so, for it is a worthy and honorable profession. Insist that when you write those around you respect your allotted time and withhold as many interruptions as possible until later. You should not be asked to leave your typewriter to tie someone's shoestring or make a pudding or hang a storm-door any more than a farmer should be asked to leave his tractor in the middle of a half-plowed field, or a business executive to entertain socially during working hours.

If you do your writing at home that makes it difficult for you to get the necessary & important quiet time that is essential to a profession. (Some writers have solved such a problem by building themselves shacks on the back lot, away from telephone connections.) Some of you have had difficulty in commanding respect for your working hours, because pay checks have been few and far between. Ironically, when they do start getting sizable to command respect, some of the more "realistic" members of the family are likely to insist that you keep regular office hours & do it all of the time.

By all means stand up for your fair share of quiet hours, to work at your chosen profession, for it is a great one. But never be ruthless. For it stands to reason that a person who has a capacity for human compassion, will have more to offer to the world, in the hours that he does write, than an utterly ruthless writer, who cannot see beyond his typewriter and cares little whom its sliding keys are keeping awake.

Poet's Workshop. Deadline for comments on Margot Foster's poem printed in the Aug. issue, is Sept. 5th. But naturally, criticism received after that date will be forwarded, and the poet will appreciate your help. We want as many members of the WCS Family, and others, too, to participate actively in the various workshops. That is one way we'll be able to help you. It is your Workshop!

Remember! The next poetry Workshop will appear in the October issue. Send in your material now for the December Workshop. "Do it now!"

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REPORT ON THE PROSE WORKSHOP

Summer was still with us when the contest for article openings (No. 4) closed. There was only a handful of mss. submitted. However these offered some interesting points, and so we are using one of these and making points on the others. We wish to reiterate, as strongly as we can, that the success and value of these workshops depends completely upon you. We are only the agents, who build technical instruction out of the materials, that you give us. Without mss. from you, we can do nothing. As you are willing to write practice stuff and send it in; as you offer your fellow writers candid and constructive criticism, you will be helping yourselves.

Here, then, is the article opening, which we are using, and for which we are sending a dollar to the author. It goes as follows:

THE LAW OF INCREASE

By Vieva Jolley

With every threat of shortages, whether of food, clothing or materials, we hear much about hoarders, those fear-ridden folks, who rush to the stores and buy up all available supplies, thus helping to create the very-scarcity they fear.

Popular opinion is against those, who deprive others of their just share. But do you realize that you may be guilty of another kind of hoarding that deprives you of your own-share of life's blessings?

NOTE: in order to facilitate criticism by readers, we are withholding our own analysis of this ms. until the October issue. We hope that a lot of readers will offer constructive criticism, and at the same time enter a ms. in one of the other workshop discussion contents listed immediately below. For that is one way that you can help yourself. Make up your mind about another's piece of writing and you at once have started to formulate in your own mind standards and a pattern of effectiveness that applies to a ms. you yourself have written, or will write. To analyze and criticize creatively, is always the best way to learn to do anything. It is like taking a watch apart. The essential concentration forces you to absorb skills into your instinctive reactions and responses.

Future Workshops: No. 5. A short short Story of 500 words or less. Closes: Oct. 10th. We will pay \$1 in addition to the Workshop's analysis. You must enclose a criticism.

No. 6. A Dramatic Scene in 300 words. This is double the length permitted in the earlier workshop on this theme. So, you have more space! (The mss. submitted for No. 3 can be rewritten, or they will be judged as is. We are holding them for consideration.) Closes: Nov. 10th. (Enclose an analysis of a previ-

ously published workshop ms. This may be as brief as you wish, but it must offer sound, helpful criticism, the best you are capable of offering.)

Here are some comments on Mrs. Wallin's ms. "You've Got to Look Ahead" (July issue). It was the opinion of Helen Betikofer that the unseen listener should be kept out. The ms. read: "What's that? Yes, well, as you say, I need a change." I agree. It's the only spot where the listener intrudes. The device is a weak one often used by monologuists. Really good ones make the other characters come alive without pretending to let them speak.

Vieva Jolley liked the story, but admitted prejudice because she knows a man of the same character. "I believe," she continues, "if the writer would omit the 4th paragraph from the end and the first sentence, in the following paragraph, she would (1) tighten up the story plot; (2) avoid monotonous repetition; and (3) not give away the outcome."

"She might put more snap into the ending, by condensing the last 2 paragraphs down to MC's plans for the long-delayed trip, followed by the first two sentences of the last paragraph. I would end the story with the word 'trip'. Leave out the 'listener.' That's detailed, sound analysis. It should be really helpful to the author. It shows how an ending must be polished, rubbed down to the natural wood, so to speak."

Bill Hausinkveld offered a good comment—"My impression of this work is that it's more of a dramatic monologue than a story." Bill feels that dramatization of even one scene, possibly more, would increase the characterization of both participants, and especially Annie, who has no personality."

Mrs. John P. Taylor feels certain she has read the story before in book form but cannot put her hand on a copy. She also, would like to see Annie as the proverbial worm do a little turning at the end.

Back to the articles. One opening started with a good, challenging simple sentence. It is well reasoned, but falls down because the second paragraph contains an over-long, not too well written sentence. That's a real selling point to any editor. Another had a split infinitive and an obviously repeating word. Whether you agree about the sinfulness of a split infinitive or not, an opening sentence is not the place for one. Nor is it advisable to urge your reader to look into history on his own hook. Do his homework for him and make reading easy for him.

Mrs. Wallin had an excellent humorous ms. But the subject was limited in interest for the most part to English audiences. And it contained an English bit of slang many readers would not understand. One writer didn't like the word "rises" in her short story.

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AN EDITOR ASKS A QUESTION

We were privileged to have Mae Heggie, the associate editor of ST. JOSEPH Magazine, ask us to settle a discussion in her office. It raised the question: Does a first person masculine story lose reader appeal when by-lined by a female, or vice versa? According to Miss Heggie, some of her editorial friends & associates think it does.

Of course the easy, obvious reply is that so masculine a magazine as ESQUIRE for many years refused knowingly to publish any story with a woman's by-line. Even now, a story by a woman has to be better than a parallel story by a man, in order to rate. And W. Somerset Maugham once asserted that he had not up to that time ever attempted to go within a woman's mind. He said that he did not believe himself competent to write as if a woman were writing the story. On the other hand he has written such a story as "Rain" about a woman of questionable virtue; and a play, "The Letter", in which a woman is considered throughout to be the murderer of her husband. And Booth Tarkington gained fame as a portrayer of the subtleties of women.

It goes without saying that most readers, quite humanly, speculate on picking up some story with a woman's by-line, but told from a masculine viewpoint, whether the woman is competent enough or understands men sufficiently to be able to make the story convincing. Some male readers and perhaps a few women, too, would carry this feeling so far as to sidestep such a story. I recall reading, some time ago, the novels of a noted author from a distant part of the British Empire. I was repelled because I felt that this woman writer seemed too masculine in her approach.

My own feeling is that few men or women understand the opposite sex sufficiently to identify themselves entirely with a character of that opposing sex. But on the contrary side, just as an actor despite his human limitations, can play many roles totally unlike himself, so a writer should possess similar flexibility. True creative ability consists in a high degree of adaptability, so that a writer is able to make the reader feel that any piece of fiction is truer than life and really is happening right here and now.

Therefore, I think that whatever the initial reaction or tendency to gossip over the fence, if the story is good the reader forgets the author and thinks and feels only of the story and the characters involved. I do not consider any author very competent, who allows his personality to get between a story and its readers. Our first interest is, or should be, in the story and the people, not the author. I recall an old stock actor who was proud as Lucifer one time because a devoted weekly audience failed to "recognize" him because of his skilful make-up and fine characterization of the role he was playing. Good newspapermen early train themselves to

keep out of their stories. They say, the public wants the facts, not our personalities, opinions and outbursts of temperament. That is true and something for young or inexperienced writers to remember. In this age when the tendency is all toward specialization, I still cling in my admiration to the writers who write well enough in an all around manner to be able to make any story that their imaginations, or an editor, call upon them to handle, sound "reasonably convincing". I do not think any man or woman writer can really "get inside" the opposite sex. Nevertheless, if you believe in genius, "all things are possible". The good writer somehow manages to snatch some of this infinite "fire" from heaven.

..OF THIS AND THAT

On another page in this issue we have reprinted a historic letter from one celebrated author to another. We originally used it several years ago in REWRITE on the occasion of the anniversary of Sarah Orne Jewett. As we have indicated on that page, we consider it sufficiently moving, as well as extremely helpful to writers, so that it bears a re-examination from time to time.

In the N. Y. HERALD TRIBUNE Book Review of July 22nd, there appeared a very interesting and provocative article by Joseph Wood Krutch on the subject, "How to Bring Children to Literature" (not the reverse!) Smashing some educational and conventional literary idols at both extremes, he indulges in an assortment of good thoughts and straight thinking that every writer, but especially writers of juvenile material, should ponder carefully.

Sum and substance of his dictum is the idea REWRITE has hammered for many years. He asserts: "Some day we are going to have to realize that you cannot 'give' anybody an education. The best you can do is to make it possible for him to get one." In every age, the great teacher is the one who, seemingly, does not teach, but merely creates, miraculously, out of his own enthusiasm and patient discernment such a love of his subject, that the student "awakens" and rushes off to teach himself, often for the rest of his life.

This method of teaching, an inspired one, is valuable to the writer in two ways. If he sees the truth of it and is moved enough, he can apply it to his own life. A little love and hunger for life and knowledge can be the most irresistible, driving motivation for a career in writing, or any art. Secondly, it can open the writer's eyes to the better and more successful practice of his craft. If he imagines himself in the teacher's chair, his reader as the avid or indolent and resisting student, it helps him to discover the necessary ways and means, as well as humility and patience to weave his own spell across a page in terms of small, minuscule squiggles and lines of black type. For your job, too, is to create enthusiasm, and help a reader to grow.

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THIS MONTH'S NEW BOOKS

MEMORIES & PORTRAITS. Ivan Bunin. Doubleday & Co. \$3.00. This is not a "how-to-write," a specific book. It is a nostalgic book, a book by a Nobel Prize winner and a pre-Soviet Russian. He returns repeatedly to Chekhov, and describes his memories of one American, the last one you would think up, Jerome K. Jerome. A pleasant and useful book to read.

THE ANALYSIS OF REALITY. Lenna Williamson The Allen Press. This is a thoughtful book, into which the author (a member of the "WCS Family") has put her heart and mind. It's a carefully reasoned system of ideas about the categories of finite reality. (No price was given. The Allen Press does the printing of the Univ. of Kansas.)

THE LITERARY MARKET PLACE. Ed. Anne J. Richter. R.R. Bowker Co., 52 West 45th St., NYC 19. \$4.25. Every year sees further improving in the editorial contents and format of this very useful listing of many aspects of book and trade organizations connected or allied to it and magazine publishing. The alphabetical index is particularly helpful. Elva & I use it constantly. To anyone wishing to be informed or to locate key personnel, it's invaluable. Vanity publishers aren't listed!

(NOTE: because the publisher quaintly makes this a "net" book, with no discounts to retail outlets, orders must be sent direct.)

AMERICAN MONETARY POLICY. E.A. Goldenweiser. Committee for Economic Development. McGraw-Hill Book Co. \$4.50. This book is according to its author's definition, an "account of the life and times of the Federal Reserve System", from 1913 to the fall of 1950. It is

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BOOKS OF PERMANENT WORTH

WRITERS ON WRITING. Ed. Herschel Brickell.. \$3.00. Handbook of the UNH Conference. Covers a wide number of fields. Bill has chapters on the Short Story and Critica, Agents, and their relation to writers. Good book.

PLOT DIGEST. Kobold Knight. \$4.00. **WRITERS' BOOK CLUB** is the exclusive American agent. A very practical and helpful book. We're proud of the fact that through our efforts it has been made available to writers at \$4.00 instead of the original price of \$7.00. English in background, it is universal in application. We recommend it.

WRITING THE CONFESSION STORY. Dorothy Collatt. \$2.50. This book is a sound one, helpful to the general fiction writer as well as the Confession specialist. We recommend it.

HOW TO WRITE FOR PLEASURE & PROFIT. Ed. Warren Bower. \$4.95. Handbook. In spite of an unappealing title, this is a good book. The wide coverage is made possible by excellent specialized chapters, written by experts or big name writers. We recommend it highly.

THE MATURE MIND. Harry Overstreet. \$2.95. A truly great mind formulates principles that are equally applicable to writing as well as living. Every writer will be a better writer for reading it. An essential book.

ARTICLE WRITING & MARKETING. George I. Bird. \$5.50. A practical book for the professional writer and the beginner. The author, and his students have sold widely.

THE CRAFT OF THE SHORT STORY. Richard Summers. \$5.50. Companion book on fiction. Good.

important reading, therefore to every American, and indeed, others who wish to understand what constitutes Money and why "Inflation" develops. Without a stable currency & balanced prices, wages, etc., there never is real security. Only economic chaos and nervous strain and tension, with eventual collapse. You owe it to yourself, then, to understand and help to do something about the basic problem of your daily life. This book is written in non-technical language, with a creative philosophy. Any writer will experience in reading it the stimulation of seeing eternal truths expressed in many phrases he himself uses. We recommend this book highly as one that you should be familiar with.

NOTE: buy all of your books through—**WRITERS' BOOK CLUB**. You save money on your buying; you strengthen your **REWRITE Magazine**—enabling it to serve you better. And, best of all, your saving is not deducted from an author's royalty, as is the case with large book clubs, which demand an exorbitant whole sale discount. Everyone benefits.

The **WCS Circulating Library** also saves you money by letting you read books in advance of buying them. Established to help you.

REWRITE

ONE ARTIST ADVISES ANOTHER

We are privileged to present on this page a bit of literary history. One hundred years ago Sarah Orne Jewett, New England writer, was born in South Berwick, Maine. An even forty years ago this month, she died there. Four years earlier a young writer from the West, named Willa Cather, published her first book of short stories. She had been a newspaper-woman, but this book won her an editorship, on the new, popular McClure's Magazine, that departing from the conservative policies of HARPER'S and The ATLANTIC, was reaching for a large circulation. It was the fore-runner of our big magazines today.

Willa Cather's first book was one of poetry. Sarah Orne Jewett had also published poetry. But this was 1909 and Willa Cather is not yet a novelist. Her first—"Alexander's Bridge," would not appear for three years. A similar period of time would elapse strangely enough, before Miss Cather turned her back on non-creative bread-winning jobs, and became a full time professional author. In the meantime, however, she paid a visit on Sarah Orne Jewett, then one of the last, and most distinguished authors in New England's golden age of authors, which had included Emerson, Longfellow, Lowell, William Dean Howells and many others.

In this wintry November of 1908, Miss Jewett was slowly dying, the result of a fall, suffered several years earlier. Always very fragile, she had not written since. Only a few bits of verse and letters to her endless friends. But following the visit from Willa Cather, worshipping young writer, whose tireless and determined spirit was already seeing dimly what it wanted from life, gallant Miss Jewett's spirit, too, responded in one last gasp. She wrote two very remarkable letters to Willa Cather, one of which we print below. In these letters she tells her young friend how disappointed she was to be "spent quite bankrupt" and so unable to give all of the thought and energy to another writer or the latter's affairs, that she would like to give with her characteristic generosity. And so when she felt less tired, she wrote what is almost her final testament, richly filled with the ripe wisdom she had gathered in more than 35 years of active writing. To us who know the circumstances and how strongly this letter affected the later career of an enormously important American novelist, this letter seems very moving.

148 Charles Street, Boston, Mass.
Sunday, 13th of December.

My dear Willa,—

I have been thinking about you and hoping that things are going well. I cannot help saying what I think about your writing and its being hindered by such incessant, important, responsible work as you have in your hands, now. I do think that it is impossible for you to work so hard and yet have your gifts mature as they should—when one's first work-

ing power has spent itself nothing ever brings it back just the same, and I do wish for you in my heart that the force of this very year could have gone into three or four stories. In the "Troll-garden" (Miss Cather's first book of short stories, 1905) the Sculptor's Funeral stands alone a head higher than the rest,—and it is to that level you must hold & take for a starting-point. You are older now than that book in general; you have been living, and reading and knowing new types; but if you don't keep and guard and mature your force, and above all, have time and quiet to perfect your work, you will be writing things, which are not much better than five years ago. This you are saying to yourself: "but I am wondering how to get at the right conditions."

I want you to be surer of your background,—you have your Nebraska life,—a child's Virginia, and now an intimate knowledge of what we are pleased to call the "Bohemia" of newspaper and magazine-office life. These are uncommon equipment, but you do not see them yet quite enough from the outside,—you stand right in the middle of each of them when you write, without having the standpoint of the looker-on who takes them each in their relation to letters, to the world.

Your good schooling and your knowledge of "The best that has been thought and said in the world," as Matthew Arnold puts it, have helped you, but these you wish and need—to deepen and enrich still more. You must find a quiet place near the best companions (not those who admire and wonder at everything one does, but those who know the good things with delight!) You do need reassurance,—every artist does!—but you need still more to feel "responsible for the state of your conscience" (your literary conscience), and you need to dream your dreams and go on to new and more shining ideals, to be aware of "the gleam", and to follow it.

Your vivid, exciting companionship in the office must not be your audience. You must find your own quiet centre of life, and you must write from that to the world that holds offices, and all society, all Bohemia. The city, the country—in short, you must write to the human heart, the great consciousness that all humanity goes to make up. Otherwise what might be strength in a writer, is only crudeness, and what might be insight is only observation; sentiment falls to sentimentality—you can write about life, but never write life itself.

And to write and work on this level, we must live on it—we must at least recognize it & defer to it at every step. We must be our own selves, but we must be our best selves. If we have patience with cheapness and thinness, as Christians must, we must know that it is—cheapness and not make believe about it.—To work in silence and with all one's heart,—that is the writer's lot. He is the only artist who must be a solitary, and yet needs—the widest outlook upon the world.

REWRITE

But you have been growing, I feel sure, in the very days when you felt most hindered, & this will be counted to you. You need to have time to yourself and time to read and add to your recognitions.

I do not know when a letter has grown this long and written itself so easily, but I have been full of thought about you. You will let me hear again from you before long?

Sarah O. Jewett

If you wish to see how much this friendly letter meant to Willa Cather, reread "O Pioneer" (1913) and "My Antonia" (1918), stories, short stories, in which Willa Cather, turning back to her Nebraskan heritage, told about the people and places that had excited her heart and imagination. And then read "The Song of the Lark" (1915) in which Miss Cather portrayed the development of a Swedish-American opera singer. In the final few pages you will find that she has given this letter back to Sarah Orne Jewett in the form of one of her greatest novels. It seems just a little stilted, and stiff today. It lacks the warm, gentle wisdom of this frail Maine writer. It has all of Miss Cather's passion and blunt, unwomanly directness, but the parallel is unmistakable. Two writers have set down in simple words the eternal truths under which authors and all artists work. And as a final proof of this read Willa Cather's own essay on Sarah Orne Jewett. Originally it was written as a foreword to a collection of Miss Jewett's stories. Just recently, it has been republished in a book of Miss Cather's writings on writing which her publisher and long-time admirer, Alfred A. Knopf, has just brought together in a recently published new book.

A MOVIE PRODUCER SURVEYS

Here is a comment on markets in movies, & now television that a successful young producer made the other day, and which we were privileged to be shown. He is generally given credit for some of the best stuff coming out of Hollywood in recent years.

"The main secret," he writes, "seems to be that one must make pictures for a short price in order to meet the existing buyers' market. Also, don't make stuff that can be subjected to live show competition. From what I have found out, there is a great opportunity (in television), as it can do nothing, nothing at all but grow. And, leasing film can be a very exciting and profitable business as it grows."

That is good advice from a young man, who has yet to do his most important work. And in the final sentence he discloses the real fascination of both the movies and television to the astute businessman. Getting, and promoting little strips of film that have a lasting picture printed on them. Your job, then, is to build stories that live long!

HUMOR IS YOUR MOST USEFUL TOOL

An old Broadway showman was once asked in my presence for a recipe for "sure-fire". He replied without any hesitation, "Take whatever theme you wish and 'tell it with laughs'! If you can write at all, you will have 'box-office' every time." He was talking in lingo all his own, but he was expressing a universal truism. Humor is the great leaven. Everyone likes to laugh. Some "sour-pusses" & intellectuals, who live on the top of their minds, may think they don't, but deep down, in their subconscious, they really do. For humor is a form of relaxation. It releases the brakes, the strains and tautness caused by the complexity of our civilization, man's age-old fears and the tightness created and always present where you and you and I have to make decisions, important or unimportant, but decisions from moment to moment.

With humor you do not need to be afraid of becoming stereotyped as in straight drama. A sense of humor is usually unique and equally as personal as all the individuals walking along your favorite street. Have you ever really stopped to look at them? You will see types: the lean, underweight mental type and the fat, jolly type and half-a-dozen or so others. There are not many in the cross-section of human nature. But then there are all the gradations. The ones that are half-and-half, that veer one way or the other or are a mixture of several types. In only two or three generations of cross-breeding, you can easily see how you can mix the species.

That is one reason why humor is so tricky and has to be handled with great skill. The belly laugh that appeals to the gregarious, easy-going person, will bitterly offend the intellectual and vice versa. That is why an author has to think eternally in overtones. What are the implications of a situation? A writer is like a man who tries to hold half-a-dozen baseballs in one hand. No sooner is one ball safely clutched than another jumps out, slithering off the smooth, curved, and slippery surfaces of numbers three and four. But the writer who can control humor, has a big advantage over the dull, straight-faced author. The latter may have all the factual documentation in the world, but he has difficulty in attracting and holding his audience.

There is something fluid about good humor that is effectively handled. People love an absurd situation that is enjoyed by the author with relish. Humor is an emotional solvent. It loosens up your reader, making him soft and pliant in your hands. Have you ever watched a comedian make an entrance? And at the same time watched the audience? They are all individual persons one moment, then the ice-breaker hits them. They grin, chuckle and melt. "This is going to be good." For a brief moment they surrender themselves, and are just a mass of humanity...Study humor a lot. Practice putting it over all you can.

REWRITE

"VANITY" PUBLISHING IS UNETHICAL

REWRITE stands four square against vanity publishing for one very simple reason. The printing plants that set themselves up as publishing houses, almost without exception require writers to sign agreements intended to bind the author to a set of one-way rules. They guaranty the minimum amount of service at the same time that they make absolutely, inescapably certain that the writer will be forced to pay on the dotted line a substantial sum at certain fixed dates.

We saw a book contract the other day that as another writer commented, "assured him a dozen free copies of his book, when and if it is published, and practically nothing else". For this he had to agree to pay \$1,700, some of it upon signing the "contract". In addition he surrendered his copyright and every word as to when the book should be published or reprinted. He accepted only a reduced royalty far below the minimum recommended by the Authors' League of America. And part of this was further reduced until after the publisher received a stated return on the book (supposedly in justice to his "investment" of time and machinery in the venture!) Nor did the author have any recourse, supposing the "publisher" failed or died. The whole thing represented an ignominious and abject slave labor surrender of his rights by the author as well as a confession of complete lack of knowledge of ordinary publishing practices. The "party of the second part" had only the necessity of consulting the standard (minimum) contract prepared by the Authors' Guild and reprinted in Philip Wittenberg's excellent legal treatise on the sale and protection of literary property (available in many many public libraries), to see how he was duped.

There is no harm in a writer printing his own book or magazine, if he wishes to learn the economics of publication the hard way.. Some of the writers' magazines accept ads. from vanity publishers on the theory that a certain number of writers are going to have their vanity (leg) pulled anyway, and therefore, they might as well accept advertising from this type of "specialist". But if they bothered to read as many vanity "contracts" as we have, they would know that they hadn't kept their readers' best interests foremost in their minds. For the usual vanity contract is a one-way ticket. It never gives the sucker a break or even a "run for his money".

If a writer prints his own book, entirely at his own expense, his publishing venture, conceivably, may fail (1) because of the entertainment value of his material; (2) on account of his own inexperience in selling or distributing his book. But at least all the money that comes in will be his. After he's paid the printer and his other expenses for advertising, shipping, etc., the money that comes in belongs to him. He does not sacrifice his copyright; he does not have to let

a so-called "publisher" share 50% in subsidiary rights that might possibly be sold—as did the writer I have referred to.

Most of all he does not tag his book with the opprobrium of having a recognized vanity publisher's name attached to it. This is a very definite and tangible professional liability. Some book review editors refuse to review books that carry the names of vanity houses. Critics generally dismiss the books thus handicapped. Only the fulsome backpatters will handle it, and this in turn helps to reduce a writer's chance of being read. A privately printed book suffers in part this same "blackbelling", but to a less degree. A reader whether he be a professional critic, a lay reader or someone active in the trade, has a grudging respect for a man who believes in himself enough to put up his own money.

This is the one unanswerable weakness the vanity publishers cannot sidestep. That is why they continually try to hide it in various ways: by advertising in the best magazines they can get to tolerate them; by editing magazines as feeders for the publication of books by those whose magazine verse they accept. Even by paying or offering inducements to small town book editors to review their books. And now by appropriating, sententiously, the phrase developed by university presses, which face the real problem of financing scholarly, limited sale books. "Co-operative" or "author participation" publication is a euphuism for the more sinister and straight out "vanity".

Do not misunderstand us. There are an inconsiderable number of small magazines that have a good reputation for publishing quality verse over a period of many years. The editors of these engage in book publishing, as some of us sell books, in order to raise the money to make possible the magazines we publish. These editors generally speaking, I believe, are conscientious according to the special fondness they have for verse. They weed out the impossible and would not knowingly publish trash. They are a race apart, thoroughly distinct from the "vanity boys", who would publish a pornographic caricature of their own mother, if there was money in it and they could circumvent the laws against person distributing such filth.

In plain language, private publishing, by the author himself is one thing, vanity publishing by someone who is well aware a book is worthless and often illiterate, is another thing. Go through the books published by many of the advertising vanity presses: you will quickly decide that the majority are a fraud, unfortunately, a legal fraud, on the author and the reader alike. And of the two the author suffers most because his pocket-book and his reputation as a writer are ruined. The reader gets off relatively easy—because there is no market for vanity books, in the ordinary sense. That's why we are unutterably opposed to this flim-flam racket.

REWRITE

HOW'S YOUR BATTING AVERAGE

Here are the acceptances reported to us in the period since the August issue closed. The September issue went to press early in August because of the UNH Conference.

Florence M. Davis

Article: The INSTRUCTOR.

Gilean Douglas (Canada)

Articles: Vancouver papers (3), The Family HERALD & STAR, FARM & RANCH, THE FREE PRESS WEEKLY, and LIVING WILDERNESS.

Lucille Coleman

Poems: IMPROVEMENT ERA, REVIEW FIFTY (and story), (English publication).

Carrie Esther Hammil

Article: GIRLS TODAY.

Story: JACK & JILL (August)

Gracey Dodge White

"Make and Do" feature: JACK & JILL.

Lucille Coleman (More)

Poem: St. Joseph NEWS-PRESS (Boys & Girls page).

Gilean Douglas (More)

Poems: COUNTRY GUIDE (3).

Helen Langworthy

Article: Lansing (Mich.) STATE JOURNAL, HOME TOWN (Aug.)

NOTE: occasionally you will find repeated or dated items in the "B.A." column. Reason is we try to help writers to build readers & editorial interest in what they are accomplishing. So we mention current "stories".

Send in your notes about sales, acceptances and market news or tips from editors. They help us to help you. Some of these items in the "B.A." are the result of our reading. We are glad to list them and writers frequently express surprise at our ability to catch so many obscurely published pieces, "on the fly", so to speak. But the progress of WCS' large family is our first interest. If you also tell us about pieces you see in print, by members of the WCS Family it helps us to keep the wheels of progress moving.

Market News and Tips. These are especially important and helpful. We read all of the writers' magazines and do a great deal of independent research. But no one can keep his fingers on the entire field. So, your notes are invaluable in helping us to check news, rumors and grapevine gossip. Here's what is done when you send in a tip:

- (1) If it needs no checking (is an original editorial letter or obvious quotes), it goes into REWRITE. Is passed along immediately.
- (2) We frequently check with the editor and get additional data. This helps the sender.
- (3) Tip goes into the CENTRAL MS. MARKET FILE

ACCURACY IS HEAVEN'S FIRST VIRTUE

"Balancing the Books", Van Allen Bradley, Chicago Daily NEWS, 400 West Madison St., Chicago 6, Ill. "I occasionally use poetry (in this column), but the limit is 14 lines. All verse must bear upon a literary theme or subject. No acknowledgement is made of mss., & there is no payment. Mss. accompanied by the usual stamped envelop will be returned if unavailable, although returns may be slow.

"Most of our contributors are from the Middle West, although the column is open to all readers everywhere."

Mr. Bradley does not consider this column a "market" for verse. He prints the "rules" semi-occasionally.

NOTE: This is a corrected tip. We printed a previous tip in our May issue, passing it along for what it was worth, and, very carefully, giving the source, a Chicago newspaperman. Receiving a complaint from a writer-contributor, we asked Mr. Bradley to tell us what his requirements are. Very promptly, he gave us the story. To the above note he added:

"The report given you by your correspondent was not correct....Mr. —, who has contributed to the column, should have read the rules more carefully. I have printed them a number of times."

Mr. —, who is not a member of the "WCS" family of writers probably intended well. He gave us the wrong length limit and described the general requirements inaccurately. A writer thereby was persuaded to send a ms., that was unsuited to the editor's needs.

I mention this at some length, not to embarrass our correspondent, but because while the consequences were not great, they prove the necessity of strict accuracy, even in a minor item. REWRITE, naturally, wishes to get important market news to its readers first. The temptation is always to rush into print without checking. In this case the evidence seemed not to require checking. It did, however. In another case where a writer said a market note was "exclusive" to us we checked with the editor. We received a routine & form hand-out, of which nearly all the other writers' magazines have been made the "victim" either by volunteer correspondents, or an enterprising and publicity-minded editor anxious to please her publisher. (A really first grade editor would be smart enough to give each magazine she sent such a "release" to, something original he could use without copying his competitors.)

REWRITE is proud that its market news and tips are generally exclusive either in fact or slanted handling. When we reprint we are always glad to give the date and credit for previous publication. We want you to have the best. So give us the best when reporting.

REWRITE

QUERYING IS A FINE ART

The question has been raised as to how to query an editor? This is important, because more and more, the day's work is being done on the editor's desk by his working closely with writers he knows and feels are responsible. There is no question that free lance writers have an equal opportunity. But they have got to prove their worth as well as the worth of their ideas. In the final analysis this can only be done in the final writing. But an editor can usually get a pretty good idea of whether a writer can handle an idea by looking over his query.

First of all, let's forget the old rumor, that an editor is too busy to answer a query from an unknown writer. That's part of good editing: to dig up usable ideas. No editor is ever too busy to give an answer about an idea. He can always say "yes" or "no". And if he thinks the writer is serious and qualified, he will usually say much more. There is hardly a day goes by now that we do not, for some reason or another, query editors. A lot of the correspondence is about requirements. Since these are generalized queries, you might expect that in many instances our letters would be ignored or answered perfunctorily. Not at all. When we explain that we represent one of the better writers' publications, and that we are seriously trying to help (1) writers to get closer to their markets, and (2) to help save editors' time by reducing the amount of unusable mss. submitted to them, almost invariably we get courteous replies. Often the editor of his own, free will advances information over and beyond what we had requested.

The important thing, we have found, is to be specific. We ask about some individual & detailed problem a writer has raised. Also, we are always careful to show that we're responsible and serious-minded. We never overplay our hand or stress the great big stuffy "Me, I and Co. Inc." We do not employ those "handles" that some writers use, which have no worth behind them. Like the writer a few days ago, whose letter head bristled with a variety of handles, most of which were handicaps rather than helps, because they were "phoney".

It goes almost without saying that a query should be just that: one single question on one subject, not a whole battery of unrelated matters. Would you be interested in an article about "Murder On the Highways"? Just as succinct as that. It gives the editor an opportunity to say "yes" or "no". When you write an article or a short story, you must try to keep the issue pin-pointed on the one problem, the one aspect of that problem you have tried to emphasize. The same thing, of course, applies to the effective query.

The reason it is better to query in writing than to call or telephone, is that thus you give editors time to use their own minds. He

can ask his secretary to check to see whether "we have one in the house already". Moreover, he can think around the subject. Such an article should be scheduled at a time when the harvest of death is particularly striking. Or the editor may wish to see how such a theme has been handled in the past. Then he can write to you that he would be interested, if you got some comments from officials from the state registry office, or figures bearing on the new turnpike that is to open on May 1st.

I have often met editors socially. Then it has been my practice to query them—without their being aware of it, or committing them in any way. The editor might ask me what it was I was working on; or I might describe a trip I had just made over the new state forest, or whatever it was I wished to suggest an article about. I would merely mention it as a topic of interest. I would never query the editor as to whether he would like an article on that subject. My attitude was that off duty, he should not be bothered. If he pricked up his ears and said he thought the seed contained a germ of an idea, I'd force him quietly to take the initiative. Then if he urged me to let him see it, I would suggest that I either do the article on speculation or submit an outline. This would allow him to okay the idea at his leisure after he had had a chance to look at it on paper, so to speak.

Many writers are too urgent in selling an editor. They try to pin him down, or act as the injured party, if their article written from an approved outline is rejected. Editors are responsible to their publishers and readers. They can't accept inferior goods or an unsatisfactory or unsuitable article because they wish to be a good fellow. So the wise writer will go a long way to satisfy an editor on speculation. He tries not toouse the editor, nor be badly used himself. You have to stress the willingness to write on speculation. Many times I have known editors to pay a writer's out-of-pocket expense or assign him another story, when he fails to hit with an on speculation idea. The only editor you need beware of is the big shot who's too busy to take time to investigate or nurse an idea.

Outlines should be brief, limited to one, well planned typewritten page. Try to dramatize and visualize the Narrative Problem. If you can think up a catchy title like "Murder On the Highways" (which has been used), utilize it as a working title. Then work up an effective, moving line of interest of half-a-dozen outstanding topics. Break these down in a few sub-divisions. Don't tell what you plan to do, SHOW it. A catchy phrase, and a bit of documented detail that stresses your timeliness and news-peg value, is worth all the didactic windiness of a dull exposition you spin for a page or more. A good query is like a movie teaser about next week's show. It makes the editor want the article.

REWRITE

AN "EXCLUSIVE" ABOUT CLASSMATE

CLASSMATE, J. Emerson Ford, 810 Broadway, Nashville 2, Tenn., recently aroused a good deal of perplexity by sending its contributors an "Editorial Notice" that: "Contributions and communications should be directed to the undersigned" (the above editor, Rev. J. Edward Iantz had been previously listed.)

Mr. Ford in an exclusive letter to REWRITE has cleared up the mystery. "The explanation is very simple. Mr. Iantz has served as assistant editor in my department for several years, with particular responsibility, naturally, for CLASSMATE. Recently, he resigned his position here to become pastor, of a church in South Bend, Ind. When a vacancy occurs in my department the responsibility automatically comes to my desk until a new assignment can be made.

"The editorial notice was designed simply to suggest to writers that they direct their communications to me, since that would prevent the forwarding of such material to Mr. Iantz and a consequent delay in handling."

CLASSMATE is, of course, one of the "top" juvenile markets. It is a publication of the editorial division of the Methodist Church. In our April issue of REWRITE we had an exclusive letter from Mr. Sewall B. Jackson—manager of the Dept. of Church School Literature, who explained how resale of material to other church publications results in substantially higher word rates and also royalty checks later. Several WCS authors in the recent past have enjoyed the surprise pleasure of receiving these second checks when a ms. has been resold to four, five or more markets outside the Methodist Church group.

SOME MARGINAL COMMENTS

UNH Conference Readers Attention. As we've done for many years, the September and October issues of REWRITE will be sent to all of those whose names appear on the Conference's "Who's Who" lists. This is in the nature of a public service, so that members can follow as fully as possible the news and reports of the Conference.

We take this opportunity, therefore, of reminding our UNH friends and others that REWRITE accepts no advertising as a matter of policy, so that it can better report the entire field of writing and selling mss. impartially and without prejudice. Over the years this policy has saved writers thousands and thousands of dollars, which otherwise would have been wasted on high priced mail-ordered "courses", incompetent "critic-agents" & song publishing rackets, fly-by-night magazines, etc., etc. (We have a standing offer of giving free advice on any of these types of services, which seek writers' patronage, contributions of mss. or money. Our only interest lies in seeing that writers benefit, and receive a dollar's worth of value for a

dollar invested. Our bulging files and long experience, as well as confidential reports from hundreds of writers, who have suffered waste of time, money and energy, enable us to report factually and extensively on most of the well advertised services.

Because of this unique policy, REWRITE is entirely dependent upon its readers for support. And as you help us to finance REWRITE and the expensive, painstaking research into market requirements, you enable us to publish a better magazine and more market tips. Many professional writers, editors, agents, teachers support REWRITE actively with subscriptions. The number of our duplicate subscriptions is growing steadily. (When writers desire a second copy of REWRITE so they can file every page if they so wish, they add \$1 to the annual \$2 subscription fee. This brings them two copies each month. An additional dollar will bring REWRITE faster because it will be sent by First Class mail.)

Re: CRIME CLUB, Isabelle Taylor, 575 Madison Ave., NYC 22. John K. Hutchens, columnist for the N.Y. HERALD TRIBUNE Book Review, recently interviewed Mrs. Taylor as a specialist in crime fiction. She stated in that discussion that several of her authors use a variety of pseudonyms and style, pace, formula. (Which indicates the type of competing writers you have to work against.) She also said that when any new gadget comes into the news (deep freeze was the one cited) that a lot of writers immediately try to construct a plot around it. (Better idea, we imagine, would be to look for one that had been overlooked, or go back to the new ones after the majority of writers had committed suicide—by first being trampled in the rush to "get there firstest with the mostest".)

Taboos? "Well," Mrs. Taylor said pleasantly, "I don't like to see very young children murdered, and I'm against trapdoors in modern New York apartments. I don't like white slavery, either." All of which proves the necessity of keeping your mayhem refined.

CRIME CLUB turns out about 4 titles monthly. It is one of the "slick" markets, along with ELLERY QUEEN'S MYSTERY Magazine, 570 Madison Ave., NYC 22, and BLACK MASK, 205 E. 42nd St., NYC 17. That means hardest to hit and a pretty good pay-off, if you can.

Elizabeth Yates. Her talk given when accepting the Newbery Medal for her prize juvenile book, "Amos Fortune", and a fine profile of her by her husband, are to be found in July-August issue of The Horn Book. Look them up.

Exclusive Market Tips. Every time a writer tells us that he has been notified by an editor of some change of policy or personnel, we immediately check with that publication for a full report on what is happening there. Because of our background and reputation for painstaking research, we generally get it. So, you, too, can help us to help you.

REWRITE

SERIAL WRITING IS HARD TO BEAT

There is an old saying that every beginning writer sends his first ms. to the POST. True or false, it is axiomatic that a great many writers instinctively make for the markets where there is the most competition. A smart author, like an experienced fisherman, searches for the rich pool that hasn't been fished. Of course, it is necessary to avoid going after the editor who demands a better type of writing than you can offer. But the writer who steers away from the crowd often comes up with the prize.

In this respect the serial and story in a number of parts, offers the fairly capable, semi-experienced writer a great deal of opportunity. Of course you have got to be able to tell a story effectively and with charm. "Sparkle", as the editors and agents usually put it. You need to prove you can sustain a piece of writing over a considerable portion of white paper. You need also to carry a reader over the breaks. But if you have a reasonably good technique, in the long run, and with a little persistence, you will find that the percentages are in your favor.

I never advise a writer to try to go into longer writing blind and without some valuable preliminary experience. For the serial demands a skill in selling, in marketing the specialized product. Editors grow wary in a direct proportion to the amount of space you desire to fill. A writer who intends to offer fiction or non-fiction extending over a number of issues, should generally speaking have a few handles to his name. He ought to be able to say in so many words to the editor, "Here's an idea. I am qualified to put it over, because I have done this and this." But if a writer has begun to prove himself, he will find the competition much less in a field like the serial.

Don't misunderstand me. In the adult slick field big names count a lot. You'd be better off to sell a few shorts or serials to a good magazine in the men's adventure group, or the women's love pulp magazines. A name helps here, too, but if you can tell a story and have an appealing style, that's what really matters. In the love magazines, moreover, the style is more sensational, you've got to emphasize the physical side of love, whereas in the slicks you suggest it. Emotion and the psychological aspects become a lot more important. This means that when an author makes the switch-over he must be able to adapt himself to this change of pace and approach.

The adult commercial serial is a "custom-made", high priced job. As a salesman there is all the difference between selling, let's say, a Lincoln and a model A Ford. Anyone can sell the latter to professional automobile men, provided it's in good condition.. But you have to sell a particular model—to a particular customer when you sell a luxury

car to a well-to-do customer. It's the same way with a serial. But as the saying is, it is worth doing, if you can swing the cat and there is only one competitor in a thousand, where there is one in a hundred in the short story field.

It is in the juvenile fiction market that the young writer has a golden opportunity.. Not only do the editors need good serials & part stories of varying lengths; but also a comparatively few writers shoot at this market. And it has the added advantage that if you climb the age groups, you can move forward into the adult serial and novel gradually, all the time getting paid for learning your trade. Many writers never go beyond the juvenile top level, the junior novel. This is because in all seriousness I can say it's one of the most remunerative and artistically satisfying types of writing. Eric Kelly used to tell us at Durham that he invariably writes his books so that they can be divided into two serials. Thus, he cashes checks three times before the story really begins to roll. An adult novel often is all throughout the end of a few weeks or months. But one of these junior novels will sell for years and each new title sells all the back ones, and vice versa.

A writer of this type has the same advantage as the daily columnist. Her public supplies many of her ideas. This is because an appreciable number of the writer's fans are eager to tell why they like a book, and also the stories they would like to see written. Temple Bailey in the adult field understood this. So does Eric Kelly. The wise writer is constantly in contact with his public, picking their brains, but also making friends & getting inside of their feelings & emotions.

In the juvenile field the supply of material is literally inexhaustible because your subjects can include well loved animals, history, heroes of all ages and activities and also sports and the developing world we live in. The junior fiction today is much truer, more realistic than it was twenty-five years ago. Children want to get a grasp on all of the problems that will be theirs in all too short a time. Stories about United Nations, the romance of rebuilding a war-torn world, and, experiments in cooperation and living, as we face it, in a magical world are a rich and, as yet, comparatively undeveloped gold mine. The great empires our government has, or will build, behind some of its huge dams and reclamation projects offer a wonderful, dramatic and soul-satisfying opportunity to alert writers.

The single condition that is laid upon an author is that he tells his story in terms, let me stress, of the child's own experience. Let a child help to live it. No need to distort history, merely to put a child into it and let him be a participant in the great events. In a word, through the serial you're able to make history, the world come alive.

REWRITE

WHAT YOU WRITE, NOT WHAT YOU JOIN!

We had a letter from a widely published & publicized writer the other day. The entire side of her paper was black with handles to her name. Editor of this magazine, member of this, and this, and that organization, etc., & etc. I ran down the list. Several of the magazines are defunct; at least two of the organizations (one of them, too, is defunct!) have been frowned upon for years by several writers' clubs, magazines (including REWRITE) and the Better Business Bureaus. Who does a writer like this think she is fooling?

Probably I was wasting my breath, but I had to tell this writer that editors are always impressed by what you have written, never by your activities. It is very easy to have too many irons in the fire. To accept honors of all kinds that are intended to publicize the donor instead of celebrating the recipient. I shall never forget sitting beside the desk of a great city editor, who taught me a lot of what little I know about writing, one hot spring night. I told him I understood he had been invited to accept an honorary degree.

He looked up and shook his head. "No, Bill," he said, "I couldn't accept anything of that kind." He didn't add that in his mind alone it wouldn't seem fitting. He didn't need to. His tone of voice and the standards his men and he himself have had to live up to, told the story. A good newspaperman never, never obligates himself in any way. People depend upon him for the truth. Other writers would do well to ponder this thought.

THE HANDICAPPED HELP ONE ANOTHER

Recently, someone mentioned to some other person that we sell our Commemorative stamp accumulations and place the money sent to us for the same, in our WCS Scholarship Fund. A notice about this found its way into Contest Magazine. We were unaware of it until piles of stamps began to come in. Thanks go, then, to Mrs. Charles Werner and Mrs. Neil Boehmer for their contributions.

The WCS Scholarship Fund is a revolving one in the sense that if any Handicapped or shut-in writer is able to repay any of the aid extended him or her, it goes back into the resources of the Fund without deductions, and thus one beneficiary helps another, who may be worse off than he.

"CATCH THEM ON THE FLY" DEP'T.

LIFE TODAY, Sara Judson, 444 Madison Ave., NYC 22, Reported Aug. 2nd via a r.s., it is overlooked "right now with verse".

You will find many of these specialty markets "thin". Have to hit em at the very moment when they're "open". That takes luck.

Please renew your subscriptions promptly. It will help us to give you better service.

THINK BEFORE YOU WRITE

One of the big differences between the amateur and the professional writer is in the latter's avoidance of stories that are hard to write or sell. Not that he deliberately, cowardly sidesteps the artistic and intellectually difficult story. Not at all. I merely mean that out of his longer, wider experience he knows instinctively what will "go" and won't. He thinks of stories in terms of the editors' and readers' viewpoints. Therefore, when he picks a story, theme or situation, he analyzes it for its difficulties. He decides whether the story is worth fighting for, and then, if so, whether the obstacles can be overcome. Sometimes, in this way, his ingenuity will be able to salvage an apparently hopeless story idea. At other times a story will appeal to him and he will do it, knowing, or at least thinking, that he cannot possibly sell it, but he will be satisfied that he has done something for his art, as the saying is. (There have been a lot of good craftsmen who have been mistaken about the final appeal of a story.)

The point I am making is that the experienced story-teller knows what he is up to & against much better than the amateur. Curiously, he may never take a note, yet he is better prepared and has cleared away more of the problems, when he starts the final writing of the story, than the amateur. For he's planned his story with infinite care and has thought it through from all angles. I don't mean that he has killed his own interest in it. On the contrary, by briefing his inner, subconscious; by discussing the story carefully with his inner source of power, he has keyed himself up to a high degree of concentration, of nervous tension and anticipation, so that when he actually starts to write, he's ready and able to solve many of the "difficulties" in full flight, as it were. He is like an athlete who is at the peak of condition and so can play "brilliantly". Apparently improvising, adapting himself with an amazing resourcefulness, he gets the reputation for genius, temperament & "all that sort of rot", as the English are sometimes supposed to say. Actually, it is the period of contemplation and communion with himself, that is responsible for most of it. Jesus is said to have gone up in the mountains to commune by himself before each of his great moments of teaching. Strangely that is the "secret" of most good extemporaneous speakers or actors. They often intend to give a straight, planned talk or act. But when they "throw away the script", it is not because they are cocky or more highly tuned than an ordinary plodder. It is because they have thought the assignment through in their minds & senses. They have made themselves a part of it.

That's why I say a lot of writers can perfect this kind of skill, if they have patience and the will to do so. Too many beginning writers go off half-cooked. They think the script will write itself. It won't.

REWRITE

IN THE MARKET PLACE

Relief Society Magazine, 40 North Main St., Salt Lake City 1, Utah, is: "the particular medium for the publication of the literary work of Latter-day Saint (Mormon) women and although occasional submissions from others are accepted, this policy still directs the contents of the Magazine. Also, we are generally well supplied with material from our regular contributors. In addition, due to the specific requirements, much of the material is ordered to meet definite needs. Accordingly, we do not believe that the listing of our Magazine as a possible market for freelance material would be advisable....If our policy should be changed, we shall be happy to communicate with you. (We advise writers to consider this a closed market. Ed.)

DIFFERENT Magazine suspended with the autumn issue.

New Book Publisher. SMITHS, Inc., Gordon W. Smith, 1008 Electric Bldg., Fort Worth 2, Texas, is "considering both fiction and non-fiction mss. Payment is on a royalty basis, in accordance with the standard author-publisher contract." (We presume this refers to the Authors' League of America minimum contract.)

Palmetto Voices, Inez Franck, editor, 121 Gallatin St., N. W., Washington 11, D. C., invites contributions of poems, published or unpublished, not more than 16 lines, in its poetry yearbook for 1951. \$15 will be given by the editor for the "poem of the year", & other prizes will be contributed by a number of writers. No other payment. Closing date, postponed from Aug. 31, to Sept. 30, 1951.. In answer to an inquiry, the editor stated:

"This yearbook is financed by mss. Contributors are not required to buy anything." (We are not familiar with the editor's work. (In general, we have always advised writers to be thoroughly familiar with the background and standards of every anthology they are invited to contribute to. To be represented in a book, for instance, in which many amateurs, and much bad verse are published, detracts, obviously, from one's reputation.)

Juvenile Syndicate. A number of members of the WCS Family have recently been reporting re-sales of their short stories through the juvenile syndicate. (See: May issue for the authoritative and exclusive article regarding this service. A few copies are still available.) This is a special service handled by the Methodist Sunday School papers. A royalty based on the number of sales is not large, but it is always welcome.

REWRITE is Now Filmed. Some of our newer, more recent readers may be interested in the fact that REWRITE for several years has been microfilmed by UNIVERSITY MICROFILMS, Ann Arbor, Mich., thus making it available in a small package that is easily stored.

THIS TAX WILL DESTROY US ALL!

Dated July 25th, a letter from the Authors' League of America was received with a memo:

"The proposed Revenue Act of 1951 contains a provision which affects all authors. Sections 1220 & 1221 require that the publisher of every book or magazine, the producers of Broadway plays, stock and amateur, radio and television producers, withhold, at the source an amount equal to 20% of the total, in royalties of any kind, paid to the author."

The League sent to all of its members the mimeo copy of Oscar Hammerstein's letter to the Senate Finance Committee, Senate Office Bldg., Washington, D. C. It advised members to protest to their senators. Unfortunately, praiseworthy as was Mr. Hammerstein's letter, it used as an example the many types of income likely to be received by a successful Broadway show, which congressmen might feel could afford this kind of a tax.

We at REWRITE lost no time in writing our opinion of this tax to the Senate's Finance Committee. We pointed out that this tax has serious implications to the small freelance writer. Not only is he already saddled with a "self-employed" tax, so that if he earns a sum in excess of \$400, he will be nicked at the rate of 2% and a fraction of his net income, but also if he earns more than \$600, he is ineligible for social security payments. (And in order to be eligible for retirement benefits, he must stop writing, although if he has no other income, he cannot live on a social security retirement benefit payment.)

If the government withholds 20% of a freelance writer's checks, many writers who are not now liable for an income tax, will have to file an income tax blank and prove they're entitled to a refund, which is now made six months after the earning year is finished. A freelance writer will be put to unnecessary inconvenience to finance himself while waiting for one-fifth of his income; the government will be forced to do a mountain of unnecessary bookkeeping, as will every editor in the country. The task of clearing an income derived from, say 500 checks of perhaps \$1 to \$50, will be inconceivable & impossible.

The worst result of this tax, however, is the fact that hundreds of small markets are going to disappear immediately. REWRITE, for instance, cannot be bothered withholding the huge sum of 20% on each \$1 paid for mss. used in the workshops. Rather than fill out government blanks, we will discontinue our attempts to create a learner's market. Poetry magazines are simply not equipped to do the paper work that will be required, and newspapers and magazines will discontinue their filler markets.

We filed a strong protest against such an unfair, unworkable tax. Hope YOU do the same!